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MEMOIR

OF

EDWARD DORR GRIFFIN, D. D.

PRESIDENT OF WILLIAMS COLLEGE :

BY

REV. ANSEL NASH.

[Originally published in the Quarterly Register.]

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P R E F A C E.

AMONG the distinguished men of the last generation in the Church of God, the subject of this Memoir held a conspicuous place. Few of his contemporaries occupied so large a space in the public eye, as he, while living, and few have been remembered with equal kindness and respect since their departure. For almost half a century his name has been intimately connected with some of the most interesting events that have occurred in the support and extension of the Redeemer's kingdom. When any new enterprise was to be started, or any important measure to be put forward, Dr. GRIFFIN was one of the few whose counsel and efforts were first sought. When his life was brought to a close, it was

felt that a wide breach was made in the walls of Zion. Within the recollection of those who will read this Memoir, it is believed there has been in this country not a single instance, in which the removal of a Christian minister has called forth more numerous or more emphatic expressions of lamentation and regret.

In what we are about to say of this honored individual, we would not have it supposed, that we regard him as a model of perfect excellence. This would be to ascribe to him that which has never belonged to any individual, except one, in our world. He had, unquestionably, the imperfections of a man. Of this, probably, no one was so fully and so painfully sensible as himself. But to dwell on his faults would be productive of no good. Besides, it is the first dictate of Christian kindness and candor to touch lightly on the imperfections of a man who did so much to make the world better. How desirable that

all the followers of Christ imitate his virtues, and endeavor to rise to the measure of moral excellence and usefulness to which he attained.

We would also remind our readers that they are by no means to expect from us full justice to his character, or to the services which he rendered to the men of his generation. The most that our limits allow is a hasty sketch of the principal circumstances of his life, together with a few general remarks respecting his intellectual and moral endowments, and his public services. For the facts embodied in this sketch we are chiefly indebted to the valuable and interesting Memoir of Dr. GRIFFIN, prefixed to his Sermons, by Dr. Sprague, and the "Reminiscences of Dr. and Mrs. GRIFFIN," in manuscript, by their daughter, Mrs. Smith.

MEMOIR.

EDWARD DORR GRIFFIN was born at East Haddam, Conn. (Millington Society,) Jan. 6th, 1770. His family connections were highly respectable. His father, George Griffin, is described as a farmer—a man of vigorous intellect, of enterprise and wealth. His mother, Eve Dorr, of Lyme, Conn. sister of Rev. Edward Dorr, of Hartford, and niece of the first Governor Griswold, is represented as having possessed uncommon personal attractions and interest. He was one of eight children—five daughters, and three sons. His sisters have all sustained the marriage relation. His brothers, Col. Josiah Griffin, of East Haddam, and George Griffin, Esq. of New York, have lived to profit by his society, his instructions, his example and prayers, to enjoy his reputation, and to weep over his grave.

From the commencement of his life, his parents, neither of them at that time a professor of religion, intended him for the ministry;—a circumstance in which we ought to re-

cognize the ordering of Him who worketh all things after the council of his own will. In early life his health was such as to allow him to take but little part in the labors of the farm. From these two circumstances his time was almost wholly devoted to study, till, at the age of sixteen, he became a member of Yale College. His preparatory studies were under the direction of Rev. Joseph Vaill of Hadlyme, for whom to the end of life he cherished much respect and veneration. While in college he manifested those superior powers of mind, to which he was afterwards indebted for his distinction. From some of his classmates the information has been received, that when it was known that Griffin had entered the list of competitors for premiums proposed by the faculty, no doubt was entertained as to the successful competitor; and the result was in almost every instance, in accordance with the expectation. He graduated at the commencement in 1790, with the first honors of his class. His next step was to enter on the study of law, uniting with it the instructions of an academy at Derby, where he says he spent nine of the gayest months of his life.

In an account of himself at this period, written near the close of his life, he states that he was struck with horror at the thought of entering the ministry without religion; and, further, that he expected, if he should not become a subject of renewing grace while in college, in all probability to lose his soul forever, as the pursuits and the company in which he should spend his time as a lawyer would, almost of necessity, divert his mind more and more from God and religion.

From the account above mentioned it appears, that from the time when he was four or five years of age he was occasionally the subject of religious impressions—so much so, that he sometimes wept and prayed with great earnestness in view of his lost and dangerous condition. He says that once his distress of mind in time of sickness was followed by a hope. This however, was full of self-righteousness, and was shortly abandoned. Though he once came so near losing his life that he was taken up for dead, from an attempt to ride an unmanageable young horse belonging to his father, it does not appear that the accident produced any permanent

impression on his mind. He continued without God in the world, till nearly a year after leaving college. He says, "When I entered my senior year, I thought it was high time to fix on my future course; and as God had not changed my heart, I said to myself, 'Why should I wait for the Lord any longer?' and devoted myself to the law." He adds, "for nearly two years I threw off the restraints of conscience, and made up my mind to be a man of the world; but my habits and a sense of propriety kept me from vicious courses." It was in the summer after he left college that the terror of the Lord was made effectual to his entering on a new course of life. When sick, in July, 1791, he was led to say with deep anxiety, "If I cannot bear this for a short time, how can I bear the pains of hell for ever?" After this he found himself resolved to lead a different life, and to devote himself to the service of God, and after his recovery these thoughts continued and increased; though it was two or three months, before he durst consider himself a child of God. He speaks of it as a matter of wonder to himself, that at this time he had no thought

of changing his profession, and ascribes it to a well known characteristic fixedness of purpose, which rendered it difficult for him to change. In the sequel we shall see that this fixedness of purpose was the means of increasing his usefulness in subsequent life.

Chosen vessel as he was to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, he was not suffered long to adhere to the purpose which he had formed respecting a profession. From the trifling circumstance of putting a Bible under his arm to walk to his chamber, he was led to those thoughts and inquiries, which, in the space of half or three quarters of an hour, induced a full determination to abandon the design to become a lawyer, and to devote himself to the ministry. Who will doubt an overruling Providence, when from such an occurrence an amount of good is seen to result which eternity alone can reveal ?

In a short time Mr. GRIFFIN entered on a course of study preparatory for the ministry under the direction of Rev. Dr. Edwards, then of New Haven, subsequently president of Union College. After devoting most of his time till the autumn of the next year to

the course of study prescribed by Dr. Edwards he was, by the Association of New Haven West, licensed to preach the gospel, on the 31st of October, 1792. It was his privilege to engage at once in the work of bringing souls from nature's darkness into the light of the gospel. The first scene of his labors and his triumph, very soon after his license, was under his father's roof. Here was a family of ten—all of them but himself without Christ—aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. He immediately entered on those well directed efficient efforts for their spiritual good, which constituted his chief employment and delight during the remnant of his days, and which divine influence rendered signally successful. First his youngest sister, then his mother, then other members of this numerous domestic circle became apparent subjects of renewing grace; till, before any breach was made in it by death, all but two became members of the visible church. Here he supposed was the commencement of the series of revivals of religion in the American churches, which has continued ever since.

In this opinion, however, he was probably

mistaken. It is indeed well known, that soon after the days of Edward, the special influences of renewing grāce in the country were in a great measure suspended. But it is believed, that these influences did in a measure return again before the year 1792, and occasional instances of what is distinctively styled a revival of religion. We do not suppose that instances of this kind were very numerous. But whether they were many or few, it cannot be considered strange that they did not come to the knowledge of a youth avowedly a man of the world, and devoted to pursuits of altogether a different nature;—especially when we consider the want, in those days, of publications which have since sprung up among us, and been made instruments of commemorating the power and grace of Zion's King. Soon after the time to which we have alluded, instances of the display of this power and grace became more numerous and more signal, and the subject of this Memoir was an honored instrument in promoting them. Indeed for the sixteen or seventeen succeeding years, the history of his life is little else than the details of revivals of religion connected

with his instrumentality. Wherever it fell to his lot to labor in the service of his Master though but for a few weeks, the divine Spirit seemed almost uniformly to accompany him, bringing men to think on their ways and to turn their feet to God's testimonies. Intelligent men of his time, who believed in evangelical religion, whatever they might think of him in other respects, were constrained to acknowledge him as a distinguished instrument in promoting the work of the Lord.

Mr. GRIFFIN preached his first sermon, Nov. 10, 1792, at Hadlyme, in the pulpit of his venerated instructor, Mr. Vaill. In the January following he was employed to preach at New Salem, a small parish in the vicinity of his native place. Here, almost immediately, commenced a revival of religion remarkable for its power and extent, and a church was gathered, where there had been none for more than forty years. Here he received a call to settle as a pastor. During the same year a similar call was also given him at Farmington in the same State. Both these calls circumstances induced him to decline. He gives the following statement re-

specting his views at that period, and the spiritual circumstances of the community. "I felt it to be a principal recommendation of a place as my residence, that the people would allow me to hold as many meetings as I pleased. I had extra meetings in every place where I preached, which was a new thing at that day. What then appeared strange, bating some youthful indiscretions, has long since become the general usage. I had opportunity to see the whole field of death before a bone began to move. And no one who comes upon the stage forty years afterwards, can have an idea of the state of things at that time."

After having preached in several places, besides those just mentioned, in his native State, he was settled as pastor of the Congregational church at New Hartford, June 4, 1795. May 17, of the following year, he was married to Frances Huntington, daughter of Rev. Joseph Huntington, D. D. of Coventry. From this connection, Mr. GRIFFIN became the father of two daughters, Frances Louisa, now the wife of Dr. Lyndon A. Smith of Newark, N. J., and Ellen Maria, wife of Rev. Robert Crawford of Adams, Mass.

During the second year after his settlement, Mr. GRIFFIN commenced a journal of his spiritual exercises, which he continued with various interruptions till near his death. This is valuable, because it makes us acquainted with the dealings of God with his soul, and exhibits the means which he employed and the conflicts through which he passed, before he reached the blessed assurance of hope, in which he left the world. From the parts of this journal contained in the Memoir of Dr. Sprague, it is evident that while he assiduously watched for the souls of others, he was far from neglecting his own heart ; that he was eminently a man of prayer ; that it was his constant study and effort to live near to God. From this source a stronger impression of the spirituality and heavenliness of his mind will be derived than the Christian public have before possessed. If any have been accustomed to think more highly of his intellectual than of his moral endowments, this Memoir may well be employed as the means of correcting this mistake. By a perusal of it they must be convinced that he was not more distinguished as a man of brilliant fancy, of pro-

found and varied intelligence, than of faith and humility, and devotedness to his Maker. Among many resolutions here copied—all breathing the same spirit—the following are especially worthy the attention of all who have the charge of souls. “*Resolved*, to set apart, as often as convenient, days for private prayer and fasting. *Resolved*, to spend as much time as possible in making religious visits to my people, especially to the sick and afflicted, and to spend as little time as possible in visits where religious conversation cannot be introduced, and to attend as many religious meetings as are convenient out of season. *Resolved*, to be much in prayer for my people, to set good examples before them, and not to conduct so as to grieve the Spirit of God away from us.”

It was to be expected, that one whose first and occasional labors in the ministry had been so signally marked by success, would not be without similar tokens of divine approbation, after entering on a pastoral office. Such was the fact. Very soon after his ordination at New Hartford, Mr. GRIFFIN was favored by a revival of religion, which brought about fifty

persons into the church. About four years afterwards, a revival took place of such power and extent as to shake the town to its centre, and give a new aspect to the face of society. Of this work of grace he gave an interesting account in two letters published in the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine for December, 1800, and January, 1801.

Soon after the gathering of this harvest, He who holdest the stars in his right hand, saw fit to order the removal of his servant to another field of labor. After a trial of about four years, it was found that Mrs. Griffin had not firmness of constitution sufficient to enable her to reside on the bleak hills of Litchfield County. This induced her husband to request a dismissal from his charge, or a temporary suspension of his labors among them, that an attempt might be made for the restoration of her health. They chose the latter, and Mr. Griffin with his wife spent the autumn of 1800 and the following winter in the milder climate of New Jersey. Here he pursued the work of the ministry, preaching in various congregations as Providence opened the way, and enjoying success similar to what had

crowned his labors in preceding years. In connection with the temporary ministry which he exercised in one place during this season, fifty were added to the visible church. The result of this experiment, concerning the health of Mrs. Griffin, was a full conviction on her mind and the minds of her friends, that it was necessary for her abode to be changed for a residence south of Connecticut. Hence when the First Presbyterian church at Newark gave Mr. GRIFFIN a call to settle among them as their colleague pastor with the venerable Dr. M'Whorter, he soon came to the conclusion that duty required him to accept it. To resign his charge among a people where he had been the instrument of so much good, cost a severe struggle on his part, and deep regret on theirs. But in a case where the pointings of Providence were so plain, who is the Christian pastor that would dare to withstand God? Would that in every instance of a minister's removal from his charge, the path of duty might be equally plain, and the results equally happy.

Installed over his new charge, Oct. 20th, 1801, Mr. GRIFFIN found himself in a field of

labor affording ample scope for all the intellectual and moral qualifications for the sacred office which he possessed. The congregation committed to him was one of the first in the country for numbers, weight of character and respectability. He soon discovered that to sustain himself on this ground demanded not only great efforts of mind, but also most assiduous anxious care in the cultivation and keeping of his heart. In addition to his efforts among his own people, he employed a part of his time in occasional tours for preaching in the neighboring region. At this period of his life, the most instructive and interesting parts of the private journal mentioned above, judging from the portion of it furnished us by his principal biographer, were committed to writing. From what he wrote in it, in those days, we should be happy to make copious extracts. But our limits forbid. The following paragraph is so much to the purpose, and on a subject so interesting, that we are disposed to transcribe it.

“Spent the last week on a preaching tour, in the neighboring congregations, where a glorious work of grace appears

to be beginning. Have been deeply impressed of late, with a conviction of a great mistake which I made in some former revivals. My mother's children made me keeper of their vineyard, but my own I did not keep. Being often engaged in public prayers, I thought it was neither necessary nor practicable to attend so much at large to the duties of the closet. And when I preached, or heard preaching, I was so concerned for others, that I did not sufficiently apply the truth to myself, and my prayers were so much upon others, that I did not enough pray for the promotion of religion in my own heart. The consequence was twofold: I got away from God, and the duties of the closet have never been so faithfully attended since; and further, I was lifted up by divine favors, and had need to be left to fall into sin to humble me. But lately I have resolved more to seek the advancement of religion in myself, while I endeavor to promote it in others, and have desired to be converted, and to catch the shower which is falling around me. Lord, while thou art converting sinners and infidels, and giving the people a fresh unction, I pray

that I may be the subject of these renewing influences, whether I have ever felt them before or not. I desire to consider myself only as a needy sinner, and to put myself in the way of those influences which are shed down upon others. O why may I not be converted by them, as well as those around me ?”

During his first residence at Newark, Mr. Griffin was pastor of the First church there about seven years and a half—to the 28th of May, 1809, when he preached his farewell sermon. These years were the period of his most signal triumphs in the work of the ministry. Besides many instances of success attending his labors in other places, he enjoyed almost a constant revival in his own society. Among them two seasons were signally marked with the divine influence. In an account of what God wrought in the latter of these seasons, he says, “This work, in point of power and stillness, exceeds all that I have ever seen. While it bears down everything with irresistible force, and seems almost to dispense with human instrumentality, it moves with so much silence, that unless we attentively observe its effects, we are tempted at

times to doubt whether anything uncommon is taking place. The converts are strongly marked with humility and self-distrust; instead of being elated with confident hopes, they are inclined to tremble. Many of them possess deep and discriminating views; and all, or almost all, are born into the distinguishing doctrines of grace. I suppose there are from two hundred and thirty to two hundred and fifty, who hope that they have become the subjects of divine grace; and many remain still under solemn impressions, whose number, I hope, is almost daily increasing.’ While he was pastor of the First church in Newark, Mr. GRIFFIN received from the world into its communion three hundred and seventy-two—in one year, a hundred and thirteen; at another time, in six months, a hundred and seventy-four.

In February, 1805, he received a call to the pastoral charge of the First Reformed Dutch Church in Albany. This call, after much prayer, and much anxious inquiry, he declined. The same year, during the session of the General Assembly in Philadelphia, he preached his missionary sermon, “The King-

dom of Christ." This discourse was published in several successive editions, and was regarded as one of the best efforts of the kind that have been made in our times. It is no disparagement to the numerous occasional sermons which he published, to ascribe the first merit among them to "The Kingdom of Christ" and the "Plea for Africa,"—the former distinguished for bold and stirring eloquence; the latter for extent and variety of information.

In one of these preaching tours to which allusion has been made, and which Mr. GRIFFIN often took in the comparatively destitute parts of New Jersey, he was brought into great peril. On a certain occasion a maniac, with a loaded fowling-piece, lay in ambush by a foot-path, where he was to pass, with a determination to take his life. But God had still work for him to do on earth. The principal service to which he was destined for Christ and his cause, was not yet performed. Hence he could not die. That maniac could no more shed his blood, than the Indian with seventeen shots of his rifle, could bring Washington to the ground, before the inde-

pendence of his country was achieved. Just at the critical moment, Providence brought to the spot the proper instrument to disarm the maniac, and to effect the escape of the man of God. A neighbor passing by, said to him, "What are you going to do with your gun?" "Look up yonder," was the reply, "don't you see that man? He is a British spy, sent over by the king of England to spy out our land, and as he comes down, I intend to shoot him." "No," said the neighbor, "he is the minister who preached for us last evening." Thus does Jehovah make horses of fire and chariots of fire the lifeguard of them for whom he has any service in the world. Often has the sayings of a devout man to his companions, in England, at a time of great danger, been verified: *Courage, brethren: don't you know we are all immortal, so long as God has anything for us to do on earth?*

In August, 1808, the trustees of Union College conferred on Mr. GRIFFIN the degree of Doctor in Divinity.

A short time previous, God had put it in the hearts of a few opulent individuals in the eastern part of Massachusetts, to exercise un-

paralleled liberality for the endowment of a Theological Seminary, that adequate means might be furnished for the education of young men for the ministry. No sooner was it decided that the first institution of this kind in our country should be established at Andover, than Dr. GRIFFIN was fixed upon to fill the department of Pulpit Eloquence. The impression of his fitness for the station may be learned from a remark of the late Dr. Samuel Spring, who, as he was starting for Newark to confer with him on the subject, said to an aged minister educated at Princeton under Samuel Davies, "*I am going to New Jersey to get President Davies for a professor in our seminary.*" As much as to say, we consider the man whom we have selected for this place, as holding the same rank among the pulpit orators of our day, that was held by that prince of preachers among his contemporaries.

Not far from the time when the Theological Seminary at Andover commenced operation, the church in Park Street, Boston, was established. The causes which led to this establishment would form a most interesting

section in the ecclesiastical history of New-England. Our limits allow us only to glance at them with a passing remark. For more than half a century there had been in Boston a gradual decline from the faith, by which the Puritan settlers of the country were distinguished. At length the evangelical system of doctrines was practically, though not avowedly and in form banished from all the pulpits, except one, belonging to the Congregational churches in the city. Against this system the wealth, the fashion, and the influence of the place, were, with few exceptions, arrayed. Instead of being cherished with respect and confidence, it was, for the most part, treated with contempt and derision. Most persons of respectable rank and standing would have been extremely reluctant to be suspected of embracing a religion, the fundamental principles of which are, that man is by nature a sinner ; that he can be saved only through the blood of Christ, made effectual to him by the special influences of the Holy Spirit. At the time to which we allude, the causes of this departure from the faith of earlier days had been insidiously working, till the corrupt lea-

ven had nearly pervaded the whole mass of the community. Not that any open direct attack had been made upon the faith once delivered to the saints. Error had gained this ascendancy, so general and so alarming, chiefly because those tenets which constitute the glory and the essence of the gospel, had been excluded from places of public religious instruction. Virtue had been substituted for true religion. Its demands on the attention of men had been exclusively urged, till they had lost sight of their own character and that of Him who died for their salvation, and overlooked his claims. Such was the general aspect of things in the principal town of New England, when a few devoted followers of the Lamb, distressed at the scene of desolation around them, and resolved on an attempt to raise up the walls of Zion which were broken down, organized themselves into a church and chose Dr. GRIFFIN for a stated preacher. They did not embark in this enterprise without first counting the cost. They were not ignorant of its bearing on their social relations. They knew that the persons who stood in the high places of the city were fully

arrayed against them ; that they had no small amount of opposition and odium to encounter. Their choice of preacher received the approbation of the Christian public. The man on whom it had fallen was pronounced well suited to occupy a post where so much responsibility, and consequences of so much importance were involved.

But for this man to rend asunder ties formed by the circumstances above related, and separate himself from a people, hundreds of whom regard him as their spiritual father, was both to himself and them a matter of no small moment. After much reflection, and, unquestionably, much looking to God for direction, he resolved to resign his charge, endearing and attractive as it was, that he might occupy two most arduous situations to the like of which he was unaccustomed. When the matter was submitted to his people, they with a magnanimity and self-denial extensively spoken of to their credit, consented to relinquish the claims which they had on the pastor—not because they loved him less, but because they loved Christ and his cause more.

On the morning after delivering his fare-

well sermon, Dr. GRIFFIN left Newark with his family for his native New England; and on the 21st of June following, he was inaugurated into the professorship to which he had been called. Almost his first appearance in this office was such as to justify and even surpass the opinion which had been entertained of his fitness for it. It was soon discovered, as well from his remarks on specimens of elocution as on the written compositions of his pupils, that he was indeed as he styled himself *a bloody man*. Still the blood was taken so kindly and withal so judiciously, that all became more attached to him who performed the operation. While to submit to his criticisms was more like being flayed alive than any thing short of it, still every one was willing under them, as he was exhorted to do, to *bow down his neck to bear*, convinced that the profit would more than compensate for the pain. All perceived that the object of their new teacher was to break up the faulty habits of delivery which they had formed in college or elsewhere—in a word, so far as this matter was concerned, to take them quite in pieces; and this they were willing should be done,

from the hope of being made up again in an improved form. The powers of discrimination which the professor exhibited on points both of taste and theology, at once gave him full ascendancy over those under his instruction. With them his decisions were received with almost implicit reliance.

But though by many it was felt that he was the very man to occupy the station assigned him at Andover, still He who fixes for men the bounds of their habitation, ordered that his servant should not long remain in it. In September succeeding his inauguration, the church in Park Street, disappointed in their hopes of obtaining the Rev. Dr. Kollock of Savannah, whom they had chosen as their pastor, immediately made unanimous choice of Dr. GRIFFIN. This choice he at once declined, for reasons which he said put his acceptance entirely out of the question. The chief of these reasons was supposed to be his connection with the Andover Seminary. This however, did not, as was hoped, set the subject at rest. Dr. GRIFFIN in a little time found that he could not, according to his own characteristic phrase, continue "connected with

two worlds." The church in Park Street, after attempting successively to secure the pastoral care and labors of several distinguished individuals, and being disappointed in them all, renewed their call to Dr. GRIFFIN, Feb. 1, 1811.

After some conflict in his mind, arising from the attachment to him and strong desire for him to remain, of the students, and of Mr. Bartlett, the founder of the professorship, Dr. GRIFFIN came to the conclusion, that Providence pointed him to Boston. Accordingly he accepted the call on the first of May, and was installed pastor of the church, July 31, 1811. Few steps of any public man have probably ever been more sincerely regretted, or have had the propriety of them more seriously called in question. The writer of this article was then a member of the seminary, and knows full well the views of his brethren, the other members, and of many persons besides. Able and interesting as Dr. GRIFFIN then was, it was felt that he had but just entered on his labors in this department, and that his powers in it were not fully developed. It was believed that he had the requisites of mind and

heart, which could not fail to raise him to a measure of excellence which had not yet been reached by himself, and hardly by any other man. Hence the propriety of his leaving a station of so much importance as the professorship of Pulpit Eloquence in the Andover Seminary for the charge of any single congregation, was by not a few more than doubted. Sufficient reasons for the course of Providence in this instance were not at first perceived. Subsequent events, however, have evinced that Dr. Griffin judged correctly and Providence ordered in wisdom. His labors as a preacher in Boston—when we take into view the qualities of head and heart which they exhibited and the results which ensued—must, beyond a doubt, be regarded as a grand effort of his life. At this distance of time we can see that God called him there, and endued him with eloquence, and power of argument, and moral courage, which fitted him for a service in the cause of Christ, of which few men have ever been capable. This was to raise a barrier against the tide of false doctrines which had been long rising, till it had well nigh swept away the foundations of many generations.

Boston, it is well known, is second to no other city in our country for the intelligence and the wealth of its inhabitants. At the time contemplated, to raise one's voice there in favor of the Evangelical system, was to hazard one's reputation for respectability and influence. In these circumstances Dr. GRIFFIN in an important sense stood alone, preaching the gospel of the grace of God. And the finger of scorn was pointed at him. And he had to breast a tide of misrepresentation and calumny, of opposition and hatred, which would have overwhelmed one who had not the spirituality of an apostle and the strength of a giant. In these circumstances he had, from nature and from grace, power to stand—not indeed as in other places, till he had gathered his spiritual children about him in hundreds—but till he had made an impression deep and abiding, in favor of a form of sound words, and the religion which came from heaven. To this impression it is owing, under God, that in the metropolis of New England, Zion so long covered with sack-cloth, has risen and shaken herself from the dust, and put on her beautiful garments. No interest-

ing revival of religion attended the labors of Dr. GRIFFIN while in Boston. But we are to regard the blow which he struck there as the great instrumentality at the commencement of the moral change which has since been witnessed in that city. Under the weight of the strokes dealt out by his arm, the enemies of God and his truth were abashed and put to silence. Many of them were constrained to feel, that what he affirms was even so. Here was the first cause of the increase of orthodox churches, and the series of revivals of religion which have since appeared in continued and blessed succession. For all these things the labors of this servant of the Lord evidently prepared the way. He was the honored instrument of commencing a reformation in that city, which we trust will go on, till *Holiness to the Lord* shall be written on all her hoarded millions, and on all her influence. To do what he did in Boston would be no mean achievement for a whole life. When the religion of that important place shall be fully restored to the standard of our puritan ancestors, the name of GRIFFIN will be held in blessed and enduring remembrance.

Here on the Sabbath evenings, in the winter of 1812 and 1813, he delivered his Park Street Lectures. They were preached to crowded audiences from all classes of the community ; and doubtless contributed to that impression of truth in Boston, from which has been witnessed such an amount of good. These lectures have been given to the world in numerous editions from the press. They constitute one of the best compends of Christian doctrine that have appeared in any country or age. They are a work of standard merit. It is no disparagement to the other productions of the author, to say, that the Park Street Lectures take the lead of them all. In future times they will probably be the principal basis of the author's reputation as a theological writer. For a clear and convincing exhibition of the doctrines of grace, and for powerful argumentation, they have few equals in our language. Let every student in theology, and every young minister, who would be a good divine or preacher, make himself familiar with these Lectures.

From various causes Dr. GRIFFIN was led to resign his charge in Boston, in the spring of

1815. He had been sent there to break up the fallow ground. He was commissioned to prepare the way for the King of kings to make his entrance into the city. When by his means the way was prepared for a company of successors to preach the doctrines of the cross in different places there, with less power but more immediate success, Providence opened the door for him to retire. Such, so far as we can gather, appear to have been the designs of Him who always prepares instruments to suit his purposes, with regard to his servants.

He was dismissed from his charge, April 27, but continued his labors till the last of May. Having previously received a call to return to Newark, as pastor of the Second Presbyterian church there, he left Boston with his family, on the first week in June, and was installed on the 20th of that month. In the following year he was privileged to take part in a general revival of religion, which was experienced in the two Presbyterian congregations at Newark, and in some of the neighboring towns. During the six years of his second residence at Newark, he devoted con-

siderable time and effort to the establishment and support of some of the leading benevolent institutions of the country. In this period, in the year 1817, he published his book on the extent of the atonement. As a work of abstract metaphysical reasoning, nothing has appeared in our country of superior if of equal merit since the days of the Edwardses. But it is too abstract and metaphysical to be of great value among common readers. It may be questioned whether the author himself had clear conceptions of all which he has spread over the pages of this book. At least if he has always kept himself in clear light, he has, in some instances, come near involving his readers in darkness. The work as a whole is of no inconsiderable value. By men of thought and investigation—whether ministers or others—most of it may be read with profit.

In the year 1821, Dr. GRIFFIN was elected President of the college at Danville, Kentucky, and also to the same office in the college at Cincinnati, Ohio. Both these appointments he declined. In the same year he was chosen President of Williams College, Williams-

town, Mass. This last appointment he chose to accept—partly from some inauspicious circumstances which rendered his continuance with the congregation at Newark not altogether eligible. He left Newark, with his family, in the latter part of October, 1821. After passing through some domestic scenes of great trial and interest, in which his conduct, as described in his narrative, quoted by Dr. Sprague, shows him to much advantage as a man of sympathy, of prayer, and of faith, he was inducted into his new office, on the 14th of November, 1821.

Williams College had, at this time, been in existence twenty-eight years. For an infant institution in a retired situation, it had been, most of the time, uncommonly prosperous. God had repeatedly visited it by the special influences of his Spirit, had made it the instrument of preparing many young men for the ministry ; and, more than this, had honoured it as the birth-place of American missions to the heathen. These circumstances were eminently suited to recommend the institution to the attention and the efforts of Dr. Griffin. And these efforts—such as probably no other

man could have made with equal efficiency and success—were peculiarly needed, when he was placed at the head of it. It was by many supposed that but one college could be maintained in the western part of Massachusetts, and that the location of this instead of being in a corner of the county of Berkshire, should be in the centre of the adjoining county of Hampshire. Hence an earnest effort was made to effect the removal of Williams College to Northampton. In the mean time a collegiate institution had been put in operation at Amherst, in the near vicinity of Northampton. These circumstances sufficiently account for the fact, that the college was now brought to the brink of ruin, and that even its warmest friends were in serious doubt, whether it would much longer have a name and a place among kindred institutions in the land. The number of students had been reduced from one hundred and thirty to forty-eight, and many confidently anticipated the time as near when '*It was*' must be written on its empty walls. This apprehension was strengthened, when in February, 1825, an act of incorporation was granted to Amherst College. President Hopkins in his sermon in the col

lege chapel, on the death of Dr. GRIFFIN, after stating, that it was felt that something must be done to revive the college after a depression of eleven years, gives the following account of the effort made at this time by his predecessor: "The trustees accordingly resolved to attempt to raise a fund of \$25,000 to establish a new professorship, and to build a chapel. In the raising of this sum, Dr. GRIFFIN was the principal agent; and strengthened by an extraordinary revival of religion, with which God in his mercy then favored the college, he accomplished probably what no other man could have done. In a time of general embarrassment, he raised \$11,000 in four weeks. The fund was completed; a professorship of rhetoric and moral philosophy was endowed; this building was erected, and, September 2d, 1828, standing where I now stand, he dedicated it, to the honor and glory of the ever blessed Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. From that time it has been felt that the college is permanent; and it has been going on side by side with sister institutions, doing its part in carrying on the great business of education in this country."

Thus it appears that Providence brought Dr. GRIFFIN to Williams College just in time to save it from extinction. The Most High designed it should live. Hence he brought to its aid the man whose shoulders were broad enough, and whose faith was strong enough, to sustain it through the crisis in which its future destiny hung in so much doubt. The pertinacity of purpose so strongly characteristic of this man, together with the respect for which he was distinguished, by the blessing of heaven, sustained him under the effort which he was now called to make. The account which he has given of his feelings and motives in view of this effort, must be acceptable to our readers.

“ The revival saved the college. There were but two professors. One of them appeared to be sinking into the grave with the consumption, the other had made up his mind to leave, if the \$25,000 could not be raised. I myself was invited to a professorship in a Theological Seminary, and had engaged to go if the fund was not raised. The trustees were discouraged by a conflict of eleven years and would probably have given up the col-

lege if the officers had left them. All depended, under God, on raising the \$25,000. That would never have been raised but for the revival. For besides that this event predisposed the Christian public to contribute, it operated on me in two ways. In the first place, by that timely interposition, (in addition to many tokens of favor manifested to the college before, which are mentioned in my sermon at the dedication of the new chapel,) I was convinced that the institution was dear to God, and that it was his purpose to preserve it. Had it not been for that confidence, I should have turned back a hundred times amidst the discouragements which surrounded me. In the next place, that revival gave me a sense of obligation which excited me to the mighty effort. The influence which came down to save the college, had, as I hoped, brought in my children; and I felt that if ever a man was bound to go till he fell down, for an institution dear to Christ, I was that man."

The result of this effort was eminently happy. The college, besides being placed on permanent footing, has ever since been rising

in respectability, in influence, in numbers; till it now contains about one hundred and sixty students, with means of education much extended and improved. For a long time the obligation which Dr. GRIFFIN laid on this institution will be mentioned to his credit—not indeed because he had uncommon tact and skill, in the management of youth, but because his reputation and his personal efforts were the means of raising it from the dust and giving it character and standing before the public.

But the services of Dr. GRIFFIN in this seat of learning, second in value only to those which he rendered to the church of Christ in Boston, were destined to have an earlier termination than was desired. In the spring of 1833, he experienced a slight paralysis, affecting his left side. This was supposed to be the commencement of the disease, which, after about four years and a half, laid him in the grave. By a post mortem examination it was ascertained that this resulted in an enlargement and softening of the heart. In August of the following year, he was affected with symptoms of dropsy in the chest. These

soon yielded to medicine, and did not return upon him till after the death of Mrs. Griffin, in 1837. "The immediate cause of his death was a general dropsical effusion."

From the time of his attack in 1833, his powers as might be expected, became enfeebled. During his remaining years, it was affecting to behold that giant frame, six feet three inches in height, and large in proportion, tottering towards its fall, and that mind, by which so many had been counselled, enlightened and edified, sharing in the decline. A solemn memento of the earthly termination of all that is good and great in man! It was, at this period, no small relief to his friends to observe, that while all about him which could perish, was tending to its own element, he was fast becoming more spiritual in his affections, and more fit for heaven. As his hold on earth became more and more loosened, the realities of eternity came over his mind with continually deeper and deeper impression to the very last. In these days his services in the college experienced occasional and sometimes prolonged interruptions. At the meeting of the trustees in August,

1837, sensible that he could no longer discharge the duties of his office, he gave in his resignation. It was accepted with the deepest regret, that circumstances made such a step necessary, and with strong emotions of gratitude for the services which he had rendered.

Previously to his resignation, Dr. GRIFFIN had received an affectionate invitation from his children at Newark, Dr. and Mrs. Smith, to make their house his abode the remainder of his days, whenever he should leave his station in the college. This was to him a source of much satisfaction. Where on earth could he wish, when borne down with years and infirmities, to spend the remainder of his days, to utter his last prayers, to send forth his last breath, if not in the bosom of his own offspring, surrounded by them for whose spiritual good he labored with so much success in his earlier and better days? How precious the gratification to them also, that they could afford a quiet resting place to this venerable saint and the companion of his youth, lingering for a little space on the shores of time, after the storms of life were

over, and just about to let go their hold on earth !

As soon as the necessary arrangements could be made, Dr. GRIFFIN left Williamstown with his family on the 29th of September, setting his face once more for Newark, and going there, not as in former instances to honor God by living and laboring for his glory, but by dying the death of the righteous. For two or three years before his departure, he had spent considerable time with his pen, revising some of his former productions for the press, and composing other articles anew. At this period he published his book on Divine Efficiency, and some sermons in the National Preacher. As he was about to take leave of Williamstown, the students of the college presented him a respectful and affectionate address. He says in the journal, "As I was getting into the carriage on Thursday morning, the students came up in procession to take their last leave. I made an address to them from the carriage, and some of them wept." Truly we envy not the feelings of him who can contemplate this scene without emotion ; a venerable man leaving his pupils

in tears, to go to the place of his former residence to die.

When Dr. GRIFFIN reached Newark for the last time, after an absence of fifteen years, he met with those expressions of kindness and respect which his former character and life there would lead us to anticipate. Various more substantial expressions of these feelings than mere words, were enjoyed by him, in the manner to which he had been from his youth accustomed—visiting from house to house, and continuing his beloved work of preaching the gospel and making addresses on public occasions, so long as he had ability. His last service of this kind, was an address and a prayer during the meetings of the Board of Foreign Missions, which commenced its sessions at Newark, September 13, 1837. On the following Sabbath he attended public worship for the last time with the people of God on earth.

His earthly career was now fast coming to a close. On the 25th of July preceding, Mrs Griffin was taken from him by a peaceful, triumphant death ; leaving, as he considered, very satisfactory evidence, that to her to die

was gain. This event, in all probability, hastened his departure from the world, and evidently had considerable influence in helping to prepare him for heaven. He had before attained the full assurance of hope. He afterwards said in his diary, "Mrs. Griffin's death has certainly been sanctified to me, and has rendered heaven more familiar, and real, and dear. And as God has evidently prepared me for that event, I know not but his present dealings are intended to prepare me to follow her soon." Mrs. Smith says, that after her mother's death, which severed her father's strongest tie to earth, and bound his thoughts and affections more firmly to heaven, he said this event made heaven "seem like another apartment in his own house." The dying exercises of Dr. GRIFFIN, as related by his daughter, have brought to mind the experience of the beloved Payson in the same circumstances. If there was not so much rapturous exultation in the case of the former as of the latter, there was surely enough to afford a complete and glorious triumph over the last enemy.

When, after the death of his wife, his drop-

sical symptoms returned, depriving him of rest, and producing an impression of the agonies of the closing scene, it is stated, "From these nature shrunk." It is however added, "Even this was but a passing cloud. The thought that Infinite wisdom and love would order every circumstance, soon dispelled it forever." After this he was often heard to say, "God has made it about as pleasant to sit up as it formerly was to lie down." As one of his brethren approached him near the last, saying "It has often been your privilege to administer consolation to the dying; I trust you experience all those consolations you have offered to others,"—raising his voice in the most emphatic manner, he repeated, "More,—more,—much more." When one inquired of him whether he continued to dread the dying struggle, he replied "No, I leave it all with God; I refer it all to God; I refer it all to his will." When another said to him, "You remember the dear Savior who is by you?" he replied with emphasis, "O yes: he never so manifested his preciousness to me before." It would be delightful to transcribe many more of his expressions—shall we say

as he stood on Pisgah's top, or as he went down into the dark valley ? But our limits forbid. Nov. 8, 1837, he "ceased to breathe without a struggle or a groan," having lived sixty-seven years, ten months, and two days, and preached the gospel forty-five years. The sermon at his funeral was preached by the Rev. Dr. Spring of New York, and it has since been published.

The Presbytery of Newark, at their meeting, April 19, 1838, in relation to the subject of this Memoir expressed themselves as follows :—

"The Presbytery record with strong emotion the departure by death, Nov. 8, of the Rev. EDWARD D. GRIFFIN, D.D. a name dear to genius and religion. He was an unwavering friend of the truth ; able in its defence, and powerful in its enforcement. His rising sun shone with uncommon splendor ; its meridian power shed a cheering and hallowed influence extensively over this, and far into pagan lands ; and his sunset scene was gilded with the richest radiance of a cloudless and triumphant faith."

Such is a hasty sketch of the principal cir-

cumstances in the eventful and useful life of this man. The numerous events which marked his earthly course, the several changes through which he passed, arose in a great measure from his uncommon character. It was hardly to be expected or desired that a man such as he was, should pursue that even tenor of his way through life, which is for the most part assigned to ordinary individuals. God evidently formed him for something else than one steady uniform course of action, from the beginning to the end of his days. By changing from place to place—for a time acting a bold efficient part in one direction, and then doing the same in another, he unquestionably accomplished a greater amount of good in the whole, than if, for the most part of his life, he had been confined to one scene of effort. Not that by any means Christ's ministers in general should think to imitate him in this respect. This would be hardly less unwarrantable than for them to arrogate to themselves the strength and versatility of talents which he possessed.

As to the usefulness of Dr. GRIFFIN'S life, it would certainly be difficult to name the in-

dividual of his profession, in his generation, who deserves to be ranked above him. To say nothing of the good which he has effected and which he may still be expected to effect as an author, and in various ways, we know not what preacher of the gospel, since the days of Whitefield, has gone to his account with the honor of having turned a greater number to righteousness than he.

We are unwilling to bring this memoir to a close, without a few general statements respecting the subject of it.

1. As a man. No competent judge at all acquainted with him, would hesitate to pronounce him one of nature's noblemen. His person was uncommonly suited to excite attention, to awaken interest and respect. His towering height, his expressive countenance, his gentlemanly dignified manners, all together gave him such an appearance, that no one could see him once, without a distinct recollection of him ever afterwards. In almost any collection, of men, whether large or small, he was the individual on whom the attention of a stranger would first be fastened. The likeness of him which was prefixed

to memoirs has been pronounced by all who knew him, an accurate and striking representation of his appearance at middle age.

His outward figure bore no slight resemblance to the features of his mind. This was of a high order, and exhibited a combination of qualities not often united in the same individual. The talents which the Creator bestowed on him were both brilliant and profound. If some men have excelled him in quickness of apprehension and rapidity of execution, few have been capable of attending to the subjects before them with closer application, or of forming more correct, discriminating and comprehensive views. He first became distinguished in public estimation for a vivid and discursive imagination. This gave him the power of saying that which was uncommonly bold and striking. In his figures and illustrations he often rose to that which was high, and became sublime:—sometimes resembling more the craggy eminence which loses its head among the clouds, than the mellow and diversified landscape. On keeping the heart, he says: “Our hearts are a tinder box, ready to take fire from

every spark, and the whole atmosphere around us is filled with scintillations as from a furnace. Without the most constant watchfulness, some flames will secretly kindle that will burn up the whole frame of a heavenly mind. Keep thy heart. Turn not thine eye away; let it be constantly fixed on that moving thing within thee. Have the arm of thy resolution near thee, to seize it the moment it attempts to fly. If you were set to keep a bird unfastened upon the palm of your hand, you would know what is meant by keeping the heart with all diligence." During the revival of religion in Williams College, to which allusion has been made, it was reported, that all the members of college, except eighteen, had professed submission to God. In the evening of the day when this report reached the President, he attended a prayer-meeting of the students, and on entering the room, commenced by quoting the words of Christ: "Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell." At the funeral of a minister, near the close of his life, after ascending the pulpit with feeble

and trembling steps to offer the closing prayer, he began with, "O Lord God, we thank thee that good men may die." In both instances the effect was overwhelming. The author of this memoir once heard him close a sermon in the following strain, and never can the impression be effaced from his recollection. "I see a storm collecting in the heavens; I discover the commotion of the troubled elements; I hear the roar of distant winds. Heaven and earth seem mingled in conflict; and I cry to those for whom I watch, A storm! a storm! get into the ark or you are swept away.—Ah, what is that I see? I see a world convulsed and falling to ruins; the sea burning like oil; nations rising from under ground; the sun falling; the damned in chains before the bar, and some of my poor hearers among them. I see them cast from the battlement of the judgment seat. My God, the eternal pit has closed upon them forever!"

No sooner did Dr. GRIFFIN become fully known to the intelligent community, than they ceased to regard him as chiefly a man of fancy. Soon after he entered on the duties

of his professorship at Andover, the students of the Seminary discovered in him that power of investigation, of acute and conclusive reasoning, which led them to change the opinion that they and others had imbibed of the character of his mind. The late Samuel Dexter of Boston, a master spirit in his day, a man whose reasoning powers were of the first order, after hearing the Park street lectures, is reported to have said in substance, *It is idle to style this man a mere declaimer: here is power of argument.* A distinguished clergyman, now at the head of one of our colleges, after reading these lectures from the press, said, *Discussion is Dr. Griffin's fort after all.* He might have been a scholar of the first order—might have laid any department of knowledge under contribution, had he chosen to do it. But so devoted was he to the great work of saving souls that he never attempted any thing of this nature, except with regard to divinity. To this subject he devoted his chief attention and inquiry, and respecting it he was much at home. With every topic of interest in the circle of theology he was familiarly acquainted.

It was characteristic of his mind to make thorough investigation of all matters which he deemed worthy of his attention. Mrs. Smith relates that during some of the last days of his life, when reduced to a state of great debility, as he was reading an account of the proceedings of some of our missionaries in foreign lands, he called for his atlas, and ceased not to examine it till he had made himself acquainted with their whole course. Unceasing industry was another trait in his character. A domestic in his family stated that she never entered his apartment when he was there, without finding him reading, writing, or in prayer.

2. As a Christian. In this as in every thing else, he aimed at completeness; striving to be in a high degree spiritually minded; to live near to God; to have much communion with him; to avoid every thing which might offend and grieve the Spirit of all grace. He aimed at these things with earnest endeavor—painfully sensible that there was much in his way; that he had great opposition to encounter. Hence he was eminently a man of prayer, spending de-

cidedly more time in his closet than is customary with other devout men. In all times of difficulty and trial his habitual earnest resort was to the throne of grace. There he was accustomed to look for every spiritual good, and to find it. Through most of his Christian life he appears to have adopted that most commendable practice, to set apart occasionally days for the special purpose of devotion and self-examination. He had a form of self-examination prepared especially for his pupils and his children after the revival at Williamstown. The daily use of this by himself, during the last year of his life, is supposed to have been of substantial use in enabling him to reach that full assurance of hope, in which he met the king of terrors with so much composure and joy.

In the religion of Dr. GRIFFIN was much of the strength of conception, the ardor and effectiveness, by which as a man he was so distinctly characterized. He had uncommonly vivid impressions of the worth of the soul, and the fearful import of losing it. In one of his printed sermons he has the following sentiment, and in nearly the following lan-

guage: "Were there but one pagan in the world, and he in the farthest corner of Asia, I solemnly affirm, that it would be the duty of all the Christians in America to go in a body to carry him the gospel, did no greater duty detain them at home, and could he not otherwise be made acquainted with it." To this and similar views which often fell from his lips he was constrained by the love of Christ. With him this was a leading and vital principle. There was no man to whom the Savior seemed to be in greater degree the centre of attraction—all and in all to his soul. Speaking of some whose religious opinions were essentially diverse from his own he once said in substance with great emotion, *I would not quarrel with them, if they would but show proper respect to my Redeemer.* At one period of his Christian life he took unusual interest in contemplating *the priesthood of Christ.* The views which he obtained of this subject were remarkably clear and vivid, and to him a source of great satisfaction and joy. In the latter part of his earthly course he rose above some of the strongest propensities of our nature, and ex-

hibited a most desirable measure of heavenliness and humility. When it was intimated to him by one of the trustees of the college, that his infirmities had become such, that the students deemed him incapable of discharging the duties of his station, he replied, *I am not conscious of the incapacity which they allege ; but the students must be right, and I submit.* At a later period of his life, when a friend had commended him for his Christian faithfulness, the tranquility of his features was disturbed, and he said with much feeling, "Don't say that again ; it is not because I am good, but because Christ has died."

3. As a divine. In this capacity he was distinguished as well for his full, uncompromising adherence to the evangelical system, as for the extent and depth of his knowledge in the things of God. The doctrines of the cross, as taught in the Scriptures of truth, he regarded as lying at the foundation of all true religion. He felt that the belief of them, and a practice consistent with it, was in man the very essence of that godliness which is profitable unto all things. It was evidently his attachment to the Lord Jesus Christ, more

than anything besides, which caused him to adhere so closely to the doctrines in question. Hence too the alarm and jealousy which he was so quick to show at any supposed tendency to depart from them, or any attempt to explain or illustrate them in a manner to which he had not been accustomed. He ever manifested that he felt most keenly for the honor of the Redeemer. It was one of the strongest impressions on his mind—an impression long and anxiously cherished—that men must embrace the doctrines of grace in their full form and extent, in order to their rendering to the Lord Jesus Christ the measure of respect which is his due. The individual besides him is not known to us who has appeared to have this impression in equal strength. Speaking once to the compiler of this article of certain speculations in divinity which Dr. GRIFFIN regarded with serious apprehension and dislike, he exclaimed with a bursting heart, *I cannot bear to see the laurels stripped from my Savior's brow.* Thus in a degree which is not common, did his pious feelings conspire with his reasoning powers to produce conviction in favor of the evangelical system.

4. As a teacher of youth. Here will be added only a single remark, to what has been already stated. Dr. GRIFFIN was unrivalled in his power of teaching young men to write and speak *with effect*. A gentleman associated with him in the faculty of Williams College, once said to a friend, speaking of the president in this respect, *I should not suppose it possible for any one to take young men of the calibre of those composing our senior class, and prepare them to write and speak with so much power*;—a specimen of the opinion entertained of him by intelligent men of his acquaintance. On this account, in great measure, it was, that so much regret was felt when he retired from the professorship at Andover.

5. As a supporter of benevolent institutions. In this particular he was what his character in other respects would lead us to anticipate. It would be impossible for a man of his comprehensive views, his fervent piety, his enlarged benevolence, to take the attitude of opposition or indifference with regard to such institutions. He esteemed them among the most essential and efficient means of accom-

plishing God's designs of mercy towards our fallen world. He declared them to be one among the three series of events which he said commenced in the year 1792, and "which need not a fourth to fill the earth with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord."—Hence he was always ready to stand forth in support of these institutions with his personal influence, his eloquence, and his property. No man made more tender and commanding appeals to the Christian community in their behalf than he. Few individuals, if any, had an influence equal to his in bringing into existence those charitable societies which aim at the conversion of the world, and which were not known, even in thought, when he came on the stage. When the poor heathen shall cast away their idols and turn to the Lord, many of them, to the latest posterity, will doubtless cherish the name of GRIFFIN with sweet and grateful recollection.

6. As a preacher of the gospel. Here lay his great excellence. In this respect he rose more above other men than in any other. His labors in this line of usefulness were also more productive of good. To style him a *great* preacher, is to name that part of his

merits which is least important. As we have seen, he was a most *successful and useful* preacher—enabled by the blessing of God to accomplish to an uncommon extent the end of preaching. In the capital point where *other* great preachers have generally failed, he was favored with remarkable success. Here rises an inquiry of vital interest :—To what was this owing ? To ascribe it to the power and grace of God, solves the inquiry but in part—or rather not at all, so far as our present object is concerned. What was there in Dr. Griffin as a preacher—in his mode of exhibiting God's truth—adapted to give it an influence so distinguished ? While we regard the Divine Spirit as the sole author of regeneration, we believe, as Dr. GRIEFIN expressed himself most happily, that that Spirit operates in the line of nature ; that hence the means best suited to produce effect, are most likely to prove successful ; in other words, that the preaching of one man may be expected to be followed by more instances of conversion than that of another, in a degree, because his preaching is better adapted to that result than the preaching of the other.

It is conceived that two things may be mentioned as furnishing reasons for the uncommon success of this man's labors in the gospel.

1. The manner of his preaching was such as to engage attention. His thoughts, his style, the intonations of his voice, his person and action—in a word, the whole substance and form of his sermon—were such as to render it next to impossible for him to be heard with drowsiness or indifference. For the most part, his hearers, from the beginning to the end of his discourse, had no disposition to withhold from him their attention; and if they ever had the disposition, they seldom had the ability.
2. He preached directly to the hearts and consciences of men. This was his great aim. His uniform endeavor was to impress on the moral sensibilities of his audience the love of Christ, the obligations of the moral law, their lost and helpless state by nature, and the dreadful results which would ensue from their rejection of the message which he delivered. With tremendous power did he arraign the sinner before the bar of his Maker and of his own conscience, showing him what he had done, and what he must do,

if he would escape the damnation of hell—at the same time that all his help was in God. The following is the account which he gives of himself as a preacher, in a letter to one of his junior brethren, requesting to be informed as to the course which he had pursued. “ I believe that an early commencement and pursuit of a systematic study of the Bible, in connection with a long course of revivals of religion in which I was permitted to be engaged, and an habitual aim, in my ordinary sermons, to reach the conscience and the heart at every stroke, and the habit of striking out, as I corrected my sermons for a new exhibition of them, every clause and word which is not subservient to this end, may be numbered among the most efficacious means of forming my present manner of preaching, such as it is.” A certain minister undertook to chide one of his hearers for going to GRIFFIN, as he styled him, declaring that his preaching was mere declamation and rant. “ *It may be so,* replied the man, “ *for aught that I know ; but after all, he will make me feel.*”

In the two things just named lay the secret, so far as means were concerned, of his causing

hearers in such numbers to give themselves to God. To these should be added the uncommon spirit of prayer, which gave him power to procure from heaven those divine influences, without which Paul may plant and Apollos may water in vain. Would all ministers preach as Dr. GRIFFIN preached—rather we should say, *could* all preach as he preached—with the same interest, and the same pointed cogent appeals, to the heart and the conscience at the same time praying as he prayed, all would have far higher reasons to hope for his success.

APPENDIX.

As this little volume is designed particularly for Sabbath Schools, we have thought an extract from Dr. GRIFFIN'S letter to Nathaniel Willis, Esq. of Boston, giving an account of the hopeful conversion of both his daughters in a precious revival season at Williamstown, would be interesting to the youthful reader. It has been frequently published in other forms.

WILLIAM'S COLLEGE, FEB. 2, 1836.

* * * "As you were so kind as to speak so tenderly of my dear children, I know it will give you joy to hear that both of them have hopefully laid their enmity and their honors at their Redeemer's feet. Help me to magnify the Lord forever. I have given my redeemed children away to Christ, with a supreme desire that they may be altogether devoted to him all the days of their lives. Whether they be rich or poor,—whether they live long or die soon,—are minor considerations.

You have been a highly favored parent, and have probably had more experience than I in these solemn and awful and interesting dealings of God. As you are so largely experienced in these matters, perhaps I may drop upon the ear of private friendship some account of what God has done for me. And if it shall encourage you or any of my dear friends to agonize more abundantly for their children, my end is answered.

Little did I think what such a blessing was to cost me. The struggle came near laying me on a bed of sickness. Never before had I such a sense of the import of that figure in Gal. iv. 19. I had I often said that in offering their children in baptism parents must believe for them, (as far as the nature of things admits,) as they did for their own souls, and must bring them to Christ as poor lost sinners, much in the same way in which they brought themselves. But now I see that if their children are to be born again in a covenant way, (it may be done in a sovereign way without them,) they must travail in birth for them. For two full months the struggle lasted before I saw any decisive signs of an answer. My younger daughter was at school at Hartford, and I sent for her home that she might have the advantage of this blessed season. Week after week, after the midnight struggle upon my wakeful pillow, I would go to my children in the morning and be dismayed to find them the same. I would then return and examine my prayers. I could not see that I set up

their interest against that of God, or my will against his will. I saw that I had no claim except on a gracious promise made to prayer. But that I seized and hung to with the grasp of death. And yet nothing seemed to follow. At last it came to this : if that was not prayer,—and in some measure the prayer of Penuel, (Gen. xxxii. 26)—I knew nothing about prayer, and must abandon my hope. If all my children must perish, I must go down with them. Such a hold had I fixed upon the promise, and such was the impossibility of letting it go, that I found I had staked every thing upon it, and upon its truth in reference to me, and it was an eternal heaven or an eternal hell for more than one. And yet God delayed. Ah then was the tug and struggle which shook the soul. After many nights I found myself, on my pillow, longing that my children might be brought to see their ruin, in order that they might see what they owed to God and their precious Redeemer,—might see his glory and bear witness for him and praise him all their days. Before, I had brought them to God as a personal interest ; now, I wished the thing done for the Lord's sake. The next morning Ellen could not sleep to think how good God was and how ungrateful she had been ; and Louisa, (whose impressions had been deeper than she had acknowledged or known,) found herself rejoicing that God reigned. Four days after as I was praying with Ellen, I felt such a nearness to Christ, and was enabled to commit her to his arms so easily, so fully, and so con-

fidently, that I could not but hope she would commit herself to him before she arose. I humbly trust he received her then. In an hour or two she was giving strong evidence of a new nature; yet for two days she lay crushed under a sense of her unworthiness, until, as she expressed it, "the preciousness and loveliness of the Savior opened to her view." During this awful suspense she received a letter from Louisa, which I send to your daughters, my dear children whom I used to catechise.

O may my soul be thankful, and may my life and my children be wholly devoted to the Lord. With my kind regards to Mrs. Willis and your children, to Mr. and Mrs. Dwight, and all my beloved friends in Boston, I am, Dear Sir,

Affectionately yours,

E. D. GRIFFIN."



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